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DEPARTMENT FOR PRM/ECA AND EUR/RUS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: WORLD VISION INCREASING ITS INGUSHETIYA SECURITY

REF: (A) MOSCOW 3137, (B) MOSCOW 3089

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In the wake of a series of incidents (refrels) indicative of a worsening safety picture in Ingushetiya, World Vision Russian Federation is working to improve its staff's security. Unlike some other PRM implementing partners, the agency does not intend to move its North Caucasus headquarters from Nazran. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Refcoord met October 29 in Moscow with World Vision Russian Federation (WVRF) Program Director Siobhan Kimmerle and Washington-based World Vision International Program Officer Rebecca Chandler. Chandler had just completed a 10-day visit to the North Caucasus to assist with WVRF's internal monitoring and evaluation as well as the hiring of an adolescent counselor to work with Ingush high school students (note: under the organization's FY 2009 cooperative agreement with PRM; end note).

Tension Flowing, Travel Ebbing

¶3. (SBU) Chandler, who last visited Ingushetiya in Spring 2008, said she noticed that WVRF's chief security officer had now begun to order the Nazran office's drivers to vary their routes. Also, she had been impressed to witness what looked like an FSB or Interior Ministry (MVD) special operation in progress around 3:30 p.m. October 24 in downtown Nazran. Five minutes by car from WVRF's headquarters, she and Kimmerle had encountered about six armored personnel carriers, several unmarked UAZ SUV's, and approximately 100 masked security officers.

¶4. (U) Kimmerle said it was still unusual to see such a large display of force, and she had immediately called back to her office and told the security supervisor to send all staff home within the next 30 minutes. Kimmerle related additional recent sources of anxiety for her colleagues:

- In June, a liquor store two blocks from WVRF's office was blown up, reportedly by radical Islamists who object to the sale of alcohol;

- Ingush gynecologists have been threatened for performing abortions; and beauty parlors have been threatened for doing women's hair (which radical Islamists believe should be covered);

- There are rumors of women who were not wearing headscarves being pulled off Ingush buses and beaten for their supposed transgression. Many women, including a member of WVRF's staff, who did not previously cover their hair have begun to do so as a matter of personal safety;

- Word has it that rebels intent on murdering (then) Ingush President Murat Zyazikov no longer are concerned about causing collateral damage, i.e. the deaths of civil servants or other "innocent" potential bystanders. Hence the rumor reported ref A - and still known only as a rumor - that half of Ingushetiya's police are planning to resign;

- Local staff (note: who live in Ingushetiya, whereas the organization's international staff reside in still comparatively secure North Ossetia; end note) pass tanks and checkpoints on their way to work and hear bombs exploding at night.

¶5. (U) Given the apprehension associated with frequent travel on Ingushetiya's roads, WVRF is looking into creating office space at its Sleptsovskaya IDP community center. The idea is to enable staff who currently travel the 40 minutes between the Sleptsovskaya center and Nazran headquarters daily to do so only weekly. Employees over the past year have furthermore stopped leaving the World Vision office to visit the local grocery store or outdoor market, emerging only to conduct official business.

¶6. (SBU) Kimmerle and Chandler affirmed that in spite of these challenges they will not move the office from Ingushetiya to Chechnya as the Danish Refugee Council and the International Rescue Committee have both done or to North Ossetia as UNHCR has done. World Vision's work is primarily in Ingushetiya, Kimmerle explained, and the organization's FY09 plans have been received with enthusiasm by the republic's ministries of health and interior. Furthermore, WVRF's Muslim employees, many of whom have loyally served the organization for years, might be at additional risk if they were to have to commute to predominantly Christian North Ossetia.

Comment

¶7. (SBU) Sending employees home early and creating new office space have costs that will eventually be reflected in program budgets. Employee stress also may lead to higher operating expenses down the line. As long as an implementing partner remains committed to our

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shared humanitarian mission and beneficiaries and host government authorities remain grateful, these costs should not deter our involvement in a troubled region. However, higher overhead costs may be reflected in future grant proposals.

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